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Book Reviews

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. By A. S. GEDEN. Edinburgh: Clark; New York: Scribner, 1909. xv+367 pages. \$3.50.

One of the great problems connected with the study of the Old Testament is that of the text. To regain its first estate has kindled the hopes and inspired the labors of many scholars. Transmitted through the centuries in separate books or small collections of books, it comes at last to be united into one volume in comparatively recent times. Our fathers knew it as come down from God, complete, never having been in any other form or condition. But our age has learned the art of asking questions. Why are the books in their present order when it does not agree with that of the bibles of many lands, nor with the original ancient records? By what paths have these come hither and how have they fared on the way? Our estimation of the character of the biblical message will depend in part on our knowledge of the ancestry of the text. The problem of the accuracy of transmission, of total or partial loss, of addition and change, may be serious if not vital. To satisfy our hearts we must search the highways of the years, we must call on the ages to produce the jewels they have received and given in heritage, that at last we may come back to the setting of the crown in its primal beauty.

All these things have been in the mind of our author. The present volume is a helpful sketch of the manuscripts, documents, versions, and editions which connect our Old Testament text with its earliest known form. The writer has prefaced the main thesis of the book by a short résumé of the Semitic family of languages of which those of the Old Testament were no mean members. There follows a review of the origin, character, extent, and later modifications of the art of writing among the Hebrews. When their language had passed from daily life and was retained in sacred use, we find later generations devising a vocalic system to transmit unimpaired the proper readings of a vowelless script. Through this medium Jewish scholars have given us the text as it existed in their day. These Massorites, or scribes, worked with painstaking care. They gathered earlier translations, traditions, and textual readings—the Targums, Kabbalah, and Keri's—and prepared a great collection of notes, critical discussions, and explanations, called the Massorah. The vast amount of labor they expended and the diligence with which they sought to transmit the text accurately, may be estimated from the fact that they

counted the number of verses in each book, marked its middle point, took careful knowledge of the conventional signs, and tabulated these mechanical data at the close of the book.

But our materials are not confined to Jewish sources or records. The biographies of the great versions of the early centuries is extremely interesting and compels conviction of their importance for present research. We are dependent upon them in large measure for the success that we have attained. They enable us to antedate by centuries the earliest Hebrew sources. Beginning with the Syriac versions the author goes on to a lengthy description of the Septuagint to which, because of its origin, aim, and character, no other document can approach in importance. The early Greek versions, such as those of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, are noted for striking characteristics so helpful to our purpose. Zealous efforts to correct corruptions are met with in Origen, Lucian, and Hesychius whose texts became rivals for acknowledgment as the standard Septuagint. The Latin versions are next in order. Their history and relations are discussed, as likewise the one which stands as a monument to Jerome's zeal and scholarship. The activity of the present Pope in endeavoring to secure a revision of the Vulgate gives it added interest for our day. Then follow the histories of the Egyptian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, and Gothic versions. Thus in review there passes before us the succession of the priceless documents which have involved heroic labors, inspired hidden sacrifice, and, in the hour of calamity, have been secreted at the price of life itself.

With the introduction of printing we enter upon a period of noble tasks. Beginning with a printed edition of the Psalms in 1477 we find the first complete Hebrew Bible printed in 1488. The first manual edition was issued from the Bomberg press in Venice in 1517. Several rabbinic Bibles under the editorship of able Jewish scholars soon followed. The *Biblia Magna Rabbinica* having text, commentaries, notes, and Targums was published in 1724-27. A marked advance was made in the study of the text by Dr. Benjamin Kennicott, professor of Hebrew in Oxford, by whom many manuscripts were collated and the variant readings noted. His work appeared in 1776-80. All the great Polyglot Bibles have the Hebrew text. In our own generation we have critical editions of the texts of each of the books published separately. These represent the work of the ripest and best scholarship of modern times.

The closing chapter is mostly foreign to the author's theme and sets forth at too great a length his solution of the Pentateuchal problem. The book is well illustrated, is written in a popular style, commands a subject

of keen interest and growing appreciation for the student of the Old Testament, and should have a place in every up-to-date library.

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Modern Research as Illustrating the Bible. The Schweich Lectures, 1908. By S. R. DRIVER, D.D., Litt.D. London: Oxford University Press, 1909. viii+95 pages. 3s.

In view of the fact that the three lectures published in this volume are the introductory course of lectures on the Schweich foundation,¹ Professor Driver saw fit, "firstly (Lecture I) to give some account of the progress that had been made during the past century in the principal branches of research enumerated in the trust deed, and afterward (Lectures II and III) to give an outline of the new knowledge respecting Palestine which had been obtained recently, partly from the inscriptions, and partly from the excavations in Palestine itself, which had formed during the last ten years such an important and interesting development of archaeological investigation." The first half of the book, therefore, summarizes the results of the travels, explorations, and excavations carried on in Egypt, Babylonia, Arabia, and the countries which were occupied by the more immediate neighbors of ancient Israel, while the second half takes up more in detail the excavations in Canaan itself.

Although necessarily but a rapid survey of the results of these excavations, etc., upon the interpretation of the Bible, this book is especially welcome as the work of one who is primarily a biblical scholar. Of the vast number of books, pamphlets, and articles upon the light which the excavations, especially those in Assyria and Babylonia, have thrown upon the Old Testament, the majority have been written, not by Old Testament scholars, but by Assyriologists or theologians. Most of the former are pan-Babylonians—Winckler and his school—who see in Israel nothing but a small border state dominated politically and intellectually by Babylonia, and in the Old Testament a mere reflection of the Babylonian *Weltanschauung*. The latter gladly accept some or all of the "results" of the excavations, but succeed in harmonizing them with the traditional interpretation of the Old Testament. Both parties seem to be agreed upon one point, namely, that archaeology has completely overthrown the

¹ The Schweich Trust was founded in 1907 in memory of the late Leopold Schweich of Paris. The trust fund is to be devoted "to the furtherance of research in the archaeology, art, history, languages, and literature of ancient civilization with reference to biblical study."